

Care Giving for a Care Giver

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Do you know someone that is taking care of a loved one? In our society, we don't have to look far to encounter someone caring for another and in need of support.

The following is an excerpt from a booklet created by the University of Victoria's – Centre on Aging entitled "How to Support a Family Caregiver".*

"OFFER HELP

Some caregivers put on a brave face and won't ask for help. Others don't have the time or energy to tell you how you can help them. By offering concrete and specific help and by being prepared to follow through with your offer, you can support the caregiver in their daily tasks. Some ways in which you can be pro-active about offering help include:

- ✓ Check with the caregiver before doing things to make sure it's OK.
- ✓ It's not the big things that help, it's the little things that make the difference.
- ✓ Phone the caregiver, don't wait for them to contact you.
- ✓ Call before you go over to make sure it is OK to visit. The time may not be appropriate and too many people can be overwhelming for both the caregiver and the patient.
- ✓ Let the caregiver know you are willing to come when needed and be available by phone.
- ✓ Only offer help if you can give it (don't offer to fix the shower if you don't know how).
- ✓ Give information, but not advice.
- ✓ Act, don't react: if the grass needs mowing, do it.
- ✓ Prepare meals that can go in the freezer or bake muffins and cookies.
- ✓ Offer to take the caregiver with you for grocery shopping or errands, or offer to do this for them.
- ✓ Offer to take the caregiver out for a short break, such as going for a walk or a car ride, or going to the library.

- ✓ Take the caregiver out for lunch, or bring lunch in.
- ✓ Assist the caregiver in exploring community resources or even attending a support meeting with them.
- ✓ Provide information regarding resources available in the community.
- ✓ Drop a note or send an email enquiring about how the caregiver is doing as well as how the patient is doing.
- ✓ Help with household tasks, do the laundry or the dishes, make the beds.
- ✓ Let the caregiver know you are sending positive energy their way and that you are thinking of them.
- ✓ Maintain your friendships and connections with them.

Be flexible with how you offer support.”

*[http://www.coag.uvic.ca/eolcare/documents/Friends%20Helping%20Caregivers%20\(web%20version\)%20.pdf](http://www.coag.uvic.ca/eolcare/documents/Friends%20Helping%20Caregivers%20(web%20version)%20.pdf)